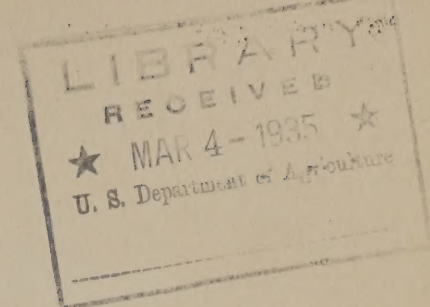


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OUT OF THE WOODS OR  
AMERICAN AGRICULTURE ADVANCES



Cast of Characters

Ben Howard, a farmer in the Corn Belt  
Hattie " , his wife  
Bob " , their son, who is attending the Agricultural  
College

Mrs. Ed. Anderson, a former neighbor of the Howards; she  
is now living in the city

Mr. Ed. Anderson, her husband  
Gladys " , their daughter

Wm. Harrison, County Agent  
Tom Archer, Vocational Agricultural Teacher  
Bill Simmons, a waggish farmer (Bureau)  
Several men and women in the audience for the Farm (Grange)  
meeting. (Union)

\* \* \* \*

ACT I--Scene 1. Time: January morning 1933.

Living room in the Howard farm Home; chairs, table, clock, etc.

As scene opens, Bob is discovered dressed to drive to College. He is searching for something, opening books, looking under the table cover, etc. He knocks book off table. Mrs. Howard, his mother, enters, wiping hands in apron.

Mrs. Howard: My land, what's going on here! What have you lost Bob?

Bob: Sorry, mother, I'm in an awful hurry; I seem to have lost some charts I was making for our lesson on farm prices. Did you happen to see a paper with a lot of squares and lines running up and down?

Mother: Let me think, seems to me I did see something like that, but I thought it was just some scribbling, and I didn't pay much attention to it. Seems like I saw it behind the clock. (Goes to clock, pulls paper from the back). Here, is this it?

Bob: Sure,--gee, thanks mother.

Mother: Well, I can't see whatever you learn from a lot of lines running up and down,--doesn't make sense to me.

Bob: Well, it may not make sense, but it helps to show where us farmers get off at. See, these parallel lines running across the page to-





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

I am sending you herewith a new pamphlet in which I thought you might be interested. This playlet or skit can be produced by any group interested in the operation of the government agricultural program. It is in three acts and will take about 45 minutes or an hour to present.

Should you desire this publication in quantity, please let me know. I shall be glad to send them.

Sincerely yours,

*Marie F. McGuire*

Marie F. McGuire  
Field Specialist in Information

Enclosure





gether--that one shows the prices of things the farmers sell, and this one, right beside it, shows the price farmers have to pay for things they buy. See here, now where it says 1909 to 1914,--

Mother: O, sure, I see it all right, but all I see is the same two lines running along together on the page. (laughs)

Bob: Well, now but listen, mother, (speaks slowly and earnestly, tracing lines on chart). This shows that from 1909 to 1914, the price of things we sold, and the price of things we bought, were pretty near together,--pretty near even. And see where our prices went in 1918 and 1919, during the War,--that's when we had \$2.00 wheat, remember?

Mother: Well, I can hardly remember that we ever did get \$2.00 for wheat, but yes, I know, go on.

Bob: Yeah, back in the days B.D.--before depression. Well, now during that time especially from 1909 to 1914, that's what the economists call parity,--farm prices were on a parity with manufactured goods. See?

Mother: Yes, I do remember when a couple of bushels of wheat would buy me a pretty fair hat? Is that parity?

Bob: Exactly, and if you bought a hat, I say if you bought a hat, 'cause I guess you haven't bought one since I was in the eighth grade, but suppose you did buy a hat any time since 1929, how many bushels of wheat would it take? Come now, bright pupil, what's the answer?

Mother: About four or five, I reckon, with wheat at 40 cents.

Bob: Correct. Now I ask you is that parity? It is not. See the lines now from 1929 to 1932,--those are the same lines but look what happens.

Mother: Yes, I see the one marked price of farm commodities doesn't keep up with the one marked prices of other commodities.

Bob: I'll say it doesn't. That's where we've been sliding to.

Mother: Well, it seems a little more sensible to - but still I don't see how we got that way. Goodness knows, we all work just as hard,-- we're saving--and we've got the land in good shape; we can produce more, what with the tractor and rotating crops, using fertilizer and all.

Bob: Yes, we can produce plenty--too much in fact--so we have surplus which is keeping down the prices. But jiminy, it's getting late. I've got to get going. I'll tell you all about it tonight. 'Bye. I'll be seein' you.

Mother: Now, don't drive too fast. The roads is terrible slippery.

Bob: Don't worry, mother, I can't drive too fast in Leaping Lena.





Mother: Goodbye, dear. (Bob dashes out. Mother shakes her head.) I'm glad he keeps so cheerful. I declare, it's been so discouraging for young folks these last few years. My, when I think of the days when I was a girl,--everybody working and contented,--and the farmers most of all.

(Mr. Howard enters reading paper; he looks up and stands watching mother who is apparently lost in thought)

Mr. Howard: A penny for your thoughts, mother!

Mother: O, Ben, I was just thinking of when we were young,--how different it was for young folks on the farm then; how proud we were when you bought this land, and what fun it was getting started and seeing our crops grow and our herd increasing.

Mr. H. Yes, and now look,--we're talking about reducing, and plowing under cotton, and cutting down on our wheat, an'--

Mother: Land sakes, it seems like flying in the face of nature. Who says we ought to reduce our crops?

Mr. H. Why, the Government, Ma. Government is trying to help farmers, or I guess it's the farmers trying to help themselves with the aid of Government.

Mother: The Government, hm. Why does Washington have to tell us farmers out here what we ought to do on our own farms? I guess we've always been able to take care of ourselves, haven't we?

Mr. H. Yes, but mother, times have changed; the country's grown up,-- a fellow can't pull up stakes and move on to free lands any more for one thing. And you know how little we have to say about the prices we get. Seems like one person acting alone can't do much about a lot of things which affect his business. Guess we'll be glad to have the Government help. Isn't that why Governments were set up in the first place,--to help all its citizens in times of emergency? Fact is, our Government has been helping for a long time in a good many ways. Don't you remember when the Government began making loans to farmers at low rates of interest?

Mother: Yes, I know, that's when we were able to buy the last 40,--but thank goodness that's all paid for. Well, if the Government has been helping, like you say, how come we're in such a depression?

Mr. H. It would take a long time, I guess, to figure it all out; one thing, is, if people in other countries can't buy some of our products, we will have it left on our hands. One reason why farm prices are so low, is that we have been raising too much wheat and cotton and so on; we've got a surplus.

Mother: Surplus, surplus, that's all I been hearing lately. Bob's talking about,--says they're teaching it in the Ag. College. How did we happen to have a surplus all of a sudden? Mean to tell me people have stopped eating food and wearing clothes? Maybe it's this crazy dicting,--every one wanting to reduce.





- Mr. H. Well, I don't know if I can explain it rightly, (phone rings, he answers) Hello, hello,--yes,--who? Milly,--Milly who? Oh, Milly Anderson, Well, well, when did you come to town,--how are you? Here, mother wants to talk to you Milly; hold the 'phone.
- Mother: Why, Milly Anderson, what a surprise! Where are you? Are you alone? Well, that's fine. Now you're both coming out here to stay tonight. Pa will drive down and get you. What's that? Oh, yes--I should say so. No, he isn't doing a thing,--same as everybody else. He just thinks he's busy. He's got to go to town anyway to get some mill feed. So you get your shopping done, and he'll call for you about three o'clock. All right, my it'll be nice to see you. Goodbye 'till then. (Mrs. Howard turns to speak to Pa.) Well, it sure will be nice to see Milly again. They're on their way down to Barnesville to see his folks. Ed is coming down for over the week end. She wants to stop over night. She brought Gladys too.
- Mr. H. Well, fine. Let's see now, Bob and Gladys are near of an age aren't they?
- Mother: Yes, Bob will be twenty-one in June, and Gladys has just turned nineteen. But don't you go match making now.
- Mr. H. No. I'll leave that to the women. (laughs) Hadn't I better kill a couple of chickens?
- Mother: Yes, do,--I suppose that'll help reduce the surplus.
- Mr. H. (Laughs) Maybe so! Say by the way, how about the Farm \*\*\*\*\* meeting tonight. We going?
- Mother: Sure,--it will be nice to take Milly and Gladys. She'll see a lot of her old friends. I'm going to bake a devils food, and I hear they're going to have a good program--music and so on.
- Mr. H. Yes, and speeches by the county agent. That'll be our chance to find out all about this AAA,--you can ask him all about the surplus.
- Mother: Well, I'd like to, but I s'pose he'll be just talking to the men; some men don't seem to realize that women are partners.
- Mr. H: (Patting her arm) You ain't aiming at me are you mother? You know I've always considered you a partner, and not a silent partner either. (He pretends to dodge).
- Mother: You'd better be going or there'll be FFF around here.
- Mr. H. What's that?
- Mother: Fur Flying Fast.





ACT I--Scene 2

Living room of the Howards. Mrs. Howard is seen straightening up room. The door opens, and Milly and Gladys Anderson enter with Pa. Mrs. Howard greets them warmly. Mr. Howard goes out again.

Mrs.Anderson: It seem like old times to be visiting you and Ed, Hattie. How are things going? I s'pose the farmers feel the depression pretty bad.

Mother: Well, we got our health, and still own our land, so we ought to be thankful, but things are pretty bad I tell you.

Milly: Oh, don't I know it, why I never worried so much in my life. Henry was out of work so long, but thank goodness, he's got a job in the Land Bank, now--appraising; his farm experience came in handy there. Gladys finished business college this fall, but of course there aren't any positions to be had.

Gladys: Oh, mother, let's not talk about the depression any more. Just see how beautiful the snow looks on those pine trees. I'm going out to look around.

Milly: All right honey. (Turns to Mrs. Howard, speaks,) You know she always was just crazy about the farm. How's Lem and Sarah? And I suppose Bob is a big strapping fellow by this time?

Mother: Oh, they're all fine,--but Bob is the only one home now. Lem of course got married,--I don't know if you remember the Simms,--he married a Simms girl, and he's working one of her pa's farms. Sarah is teaching over to Hill City. You'd never know Bob, he's good looking too, if I do say so. He favors my folks. Bob's doing well in his studies too. He drives over to Vernon Center to the Ag. College every day.

Milly: Well, I don't know, but seems like it's almost a waste of time to be studying agriculture these days, the way things are going.

Mother: Oh, Bob loves the farm--we all do--all we ask is a chance to make a fair living, but I tell you with 40 cent wheat, 3 cent hogs and 16 cent butter, I don't know--but Bob says that we need to know how to farm better now more than we ever did,--so's to make everything count.

Milly: You know what beats me is the price we pay in the city for food; of course things have come down some lately, but I remember when I was living in St. Paul, father would write me that all he could get for his fine potatoes would be maybe 25 or 30 cents a bushel, and here I was paying a dollar or a dollar and a quarter for littly scabby ones.

Mother: I know it; its beyond me, but things are bound to pick up. I get so tired wearing the same old clothes and patching and patching. If it wasn't for the help and encouragement the Home Demonstration agents give us, I don't know what we'd do. But we have good times at our meeting, and we do all sorts of things,--learn new ways. I'll show you some of the sewing we've been doing.





- (Door opens, and Bob and Gladys enter, laughing.) (Bob greets Mrs. Anderson) Well, how do you do, Mrs. Anderson? Say, was I ever surprised to see Gladys,--I hardly knew her; she was only a freckle-faced kid when you left five years ago and now (makes deep bow).
- Gladys: Well, you've improved some yourself since the days when you used to pull my hair.
- Bob: O, O, how did I ever dare? Don't remind me.
- Mother: Well, now we've got to get supper out of the way early on account of the meeting of the Farm\_\_\_\_\_tonight. We thought you and Gladys would enjoy going, Milly. You'll meet a lot of old friends,--like as not see your old beau, Amos Smith, Remember him?
- Milly: Do I,--will you ever forget how he used to bounce up and down when he danced?
- Mother: 'Member the time we had the moonlight picnic out to Ed. Johnson's place and Ed. got so excited he fell in the crick.--
- Bob: Moonlight picnics, eh,--there's an idea, Gladys.

C U R T A I N





ACT II--Scene 1  
Evening Meeting of the Farm\_\_\_\_\_.

Room with about a dozen chairs and a table. On the wall there are charts showing the disparity between farm prices and prices of other commodities.

The president of the Farm\_\_\_\_\_, Mr. Green, is on stage talking with Harrison, the County Agent, and Tom Archer, the Vocational Agricultural Teacher. (The teacher may be from the Agricultural College, or from a Vocational High School).

Green: I hope there'll be a good turn-out tonight, Now, how shall we arrange the meeting? Which of you men will speak first?

Archer: I think I might show the charts and speak briefly first, and then Harrison can speak on the whole program, and the necessity of it--you know some of the philosophy.

Harrison: I think that's all right; I intend to devote most of the time to discussion and questions. This is the farmers' program, and I want them to do most of the talking. Well, here they come. (People have been coming in quietly--only two or three until Harrison stops speaking. Then they come in in a group, talking and laughing--there may be any number, but preferably not more than 15. About an equal number of men and women. The women carry baskets and lunch boxes which they place in the corner of the room. Milly and Mrs. Howard go around shaking hands and introducing Gladys. When Archer meets Gladys he stands talking to her until the meeting is called to order.) (President Green now raps for order).

Green: Friends and neighbors: It's a pleasure to see so many out to hear the discussion of the proposed program of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration for corn and hog control. Now we've got a good program of music and speeches, and plenty of good things to eat, so I am not going to take up the time in making speeches. The first number on the program will be (any musical number, solo, or instrumental may be given). Thank you very much. We'll have some more music later. At this time I wish to present Mr. Archer, our\_\_\_\_\_teacher. Mr. Archer

Archer: (Speaks from the charts). In any consideration of a program for agriculture, it is useful and necessary I think to show the situation and need. I have some charts here prepared by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, which show the inequality or disparity existing between farm prices and prices of other commodities. I might say first, however, that the share of the national income which has gone to agriculture has been decreasing. In 1921 when the national income was about 63 billion dollars, the farmers, who comprise about one-fourth of our population, received only 11%. In 1928, when the national income had risen to 88 billions, the farmer's share had been cut to 9.3%, and in 1932, in the depression the national income was cut to about 52 billion dollars; the farmers' share of that reduced amount had fallen to little more than 7%. The purchasing power of a given





quantity of goods farmers sell was about one-half of what it had been before the War. You see by this chart, the relation between farm prices and industrial prices; (he traces lines on the map, showing the great difference existing in 1932).

Green: Thank you Mr. Archer. I don't need to introduce the next speaker, our popular and hard-working county agent; Mr. Harrison is going to tell us what it's all about. Mr. Harrison:--

Harrison: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: A good many of us have been wondering what's happened to make farming as unprofitable as it is today. Of course, we know there's a world depression, but the farmers' depression started before that,--back in 1920, to be exact. We've tumbled so fast we hardly know how or why we got here. And what we want to know is how to climb back. Well, there are a good many factors in the situation--our country's grown up for one thing, and pretty well settled,--our frontiers and free lands are gone; although with the price of land what it is today, we're almost back to free land; then, of course, high priced land, and speculation entered into the picture just before and during the War, and too, the fact that we can produce so much by the aid of machinery. But where we got our big start down hill was during the World War. You remember the slogan: "Food will win the War"--and you farmers were urged as a patriotic duty to plant more and more of your acres to food crops. And American farmers responded; they planted upwards of fifty million extra acres,--and you know that in the rush to produce enough food and cotton, some land was planted that never should have been plowed up; it's called submarginal land now. And many farmers went into debt for land and machinery. Well, for a time things boomed, and we kept right on producing as though the foreign market was going to last forever. But it didn't. Europeans didn't have much money left after the War to buy, for one thing; they owed us money and they wanted to sell some goods here in order to get some money to pay those debts, but you know how tariff walls went up all over the World,--not only here but in every country; that was bad enough, but then the quota systems developed, and countries put their buying from other nations on a quota basis, taking just so much. Foreign nations, France, Germany and others began to encourage the growing of food crops in their own countries, so that if war came again they would not be dependent. Meanwhile, the United States was maintaining its own production as if the foreign nations were still buying our products in the same large quantities. Well, to make a long story short, that left us with a lot of surplus farm products in this country, which we couldn't sell abroad or consume at home, and of course those surpluses kept the price down. And then don't forget there were 11 million less horses and mules to eat grain--we had tractors instead.

Prices went so low, that our 6 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  million farm families had practically no buying power,--and then the banks and the industries began to suffer. When the farmers can't buy--paint, clothing, machinery, automobiles and other manufactured goods, then industry begins to adjust; the manufacturers don't make so many things if they find that they can't be sold, and, of course, that means that they lay off workers; those unemployed workers can't buy your products as they should and so it goes round and round-- what they call a vicious



circle. From 1929 to 1932 the income of the farmers of this country dropped from 12 billion dollars to 5; then things got so desperate that in some places we had farm strikes,--people were losing their homes. The new Congress declared that the condition of American agriculture created a national emergency. In this situation, President Roosevelt, Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, and their farm advisors in Congress decided to set up a program for agricultural recovery which would help in three ways:

1. By reducing the surplus and by paying farmers cash to agree not to keep on raising too much.
2. To make credit conditions easier,--and scale down mortgages.
3. To change the price of gold so that foreign money in exchange could buy more of our agricultural products.

Those three provisions were put into a law called the Agricultural Adjustment Act. But here tonight we're talking about only the first part of that law,--about reducing the amount of acres put into certain crops. Programs were developed to adjust production of wheat, cotton, tobacco, and now corn-hogs. Here in the corn belt, you farmers are being offered a program under which you can reduce your corn acreage by from 20 to 30% and get 30 cents a bushel on the corn you might have raised, and get \$5 apiece on 75% of your average hog production after you've agreed to cut down hog production 25%. You sign a contract with the Secretary of Agriculture agreeing to do this, then you get the benefit payments. And when the surplus is removed, you get the higher price for the stuff you have to sell. Now the money to pay these benefits does not come out of the United States Treasury. It will be paid by a processing tax collected from the millers and packers who process your products for market. The processors will turn this money over to the Treasury and the Government sends you the checks. The acres you rent to the Government, and do not plant to crops for sale, can be planted to pasture or to some crop that will improve soil fertility--like soy beans; or you can start a wood lot, and those provisions are good. There are other features,--for instance, there will be marketing agreements and licenses for milk and certain fruits and vegetables so that dealers will have to pay farmers fair prices; if they don't their licenses can be taken away.

Now, friends, remember that the reduction part of this program is an emergency one,--we have to do something to get a little money into the farmers' hands and start buying power in that great basic group, as well as to remove surplus products. In the pig buying that went on this last fall, that pork was given to the needy people in cities. It was bought by the Federal Surplus Relief Corporation.

Now, of course, if we get back some of our foreign markets, if something is done about trade regulations around the world, and if we will agree to take some products from other countries, we may expand a little again. But until we do, it's only sensible to produce for the market we do have. And another thing we've got to think about is saving our fertile lands. We'll have to get some of the land back to grass roots. And now I hope you'll ask me a lot of questions. Maybe I can't answer them all, but I'll do my best. (Applause)

Farmer: Well, it sounds sensible enough, but won't there be a lot of opposition to us farmers cutting down on production while people are going hungry?





- 2nd farmer: (jumping up): Well, by jiminy, I don't see how we can go on producin' for nothing; if we don't get some decent prices soon, we won't have money left to pay the taxes, and then when we've lost the land--what we going to do? Who's going to go ahead and raise crops if there isn't any money in it?
- Harrison: As long as we live under the price and profit system, the farmer has to share in those profits, and get a fair price. It is not the responsibility of the farmer to raise food on land for which he has paid money, and then give the food away. Neither could the Government let farmers produce all they could and then buy the products outright and give them away; that would not be fair to consumers or to other producers--and think of the taxes. And remember, that the more you produced at starvation prices, the longer the bread lines grew; unemployed people didn't have wages to buy your products, and you couldn't give them away. Farm surpluses don't feed the hungry and clothe the naked.
- Farmer: I would like to ask on what was the wheat reduction based? It wouldn't be fair to judge just on the crop we got last year.
- Harrison: Oh, no, you see they take a five year average production from 1928-1932, and for corn the base acreage will be the average for 1932 and 1933.
- Farmer: Well, how they going to get this going? Will there be a lot of Government agents snooping around telling me just how many spears of timothy hay I can grow on my own land, if I do agree to cut down my corn?
- Harrison: Well, Mr. Hanson, the whole thing will be administered right out here. The Extension Service of the State Agricultural College will have the responsibility of carrying on the program, but you fellows will elect your own township and county control and allotment committees. Of course, I may do some of the snooping, but I've been here quite awhile and you don't seem to mind my snooping. (laughter)
- Farmer: That sounds good to me--if we can have our own say. But how will we know if a fellow lives up to his contract? Maybe he might boot-leg a little.
- Harrison: Oh, I don't think that will be so difficult. Of course, we'll have to measure the fields,--
- Bill Simmons, a waggish farmer jumps up and acts out his speech:
- Simmons: Oh, boy! Let the women in on this; come on girls, bring on your scissors, needles and pins and tapemeasures and help us cut and measure and sew up this here field of corn. Look out there--(waves hand),--shé's a quarter of an inch out of line,--you'll have to trim the edges a mite. (everybody laughs).
- Farmer: But you say the millers and packers will pay the processing tax--you mean to say they'll pay it out of their own profits?





- Harrison: Not entirely, perhaps. I suppose a large part of it will be passed on to the consumer.
- Farmer: Or maybe to the producer. Maybe we'll have to pay for our own program of relief.
- Harrison: Well, it certainly can't be true that the processor, the consumer, and the farmer each pays all of the tax. Probably all three pay a little, but the main thing is that the money will end up in the farmer's own pocket,--he'll get it back in benefit payments; if there were no processing tax there couldn't be any benefit payments, and if there were no benefit payments, you wouldn't want to go ahead and cut down your production, would you? And then, if all of you did not reduce acreage, we're likely to go on having big surpluses and low prices. So that's the way it goes, you see. It boils down to this; you can go ahead and produce more at greater cost and get less and no benefit payment, or you can produce less at less cost, receive the benefit payment and get a bigger price because you've cut down the surplus. Get this straight-- all the processing tax money is paid back to farmers in benefit payments.
- Mrs. Anderson: May I ask a question? I used to live on a farm, but I'm in the city now, and I'm wondering how this program will affect me.
- Harrison: Surely--we like to see the ladies take an interest.
- Mrs. Anderson: What I want to know is, if this processing tax as you call it is paid by the consumer, won't it add an awful lot to the price of bread and pork chops and cotton goods? Where will it stop? Maybe the dealers will keep on piling on the prices and goodness knows so many city people are hardly able to buy now--just like you said.
- Harrison: That's true, but they won't be able to buy either until they get their jobs back, and a lot of 'em won't get their jobs back until farmers can start buying something again. Now about that added cost to your food and clothing bills. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration has a division called the Consumers Counsel just to protect people from too high prices. This Consumers Counsel has figured out that the processing tax on wheat will add one-half cent to a loaf of bread costing seven and nine-tenths cents, and it will add about a nickel to a man's work shirt, and 8 cents to an ordinary bed sheet. But consumers will be glad to pay that little extra cost when they understand that this will be offset by the returning buying power of the farmer. The depression, if it continues, will cost us all much more than that slight added cost.
- Simmons: Well, we been payin' tariff on a lot of manufactured stuff haven't we, and I ain't heard much kicking. Course the Democrats used to say something now and then--or let's see--was it the Democrats who used to talk about the tariff?
- Harrison: Well, whoever talked about it, we farmers had better begin to think about it. It never helped the farmers whose basic crops went out of the country. For tariff only applies to goods coming into the country. In fact it hurt farmers, for it added to the cost of the



manufactured goods he has to buy, which were protected by tariff. On that work shirt for example--on which the processing tax of a nickel will go to help the farmer--we've been supporting a 35 to 37 percent tariff rate to help the manufacturer, and that costs us more than a nickel a shirt.

Farmer: I'm interested in those acres we're going to leave idle; are we just going to let them stay out of production forever?

Harrison: It's hardly correct to say that they will be idle--they will be planted as I told you to forage crops or left in pasture or wood lots. I think we all agreed that we need more grass roots to help hold down the soil that's been blowing away and washing away.

Farmer: That's right. Say, I read somewhere that in some places where there's no trees and grass, where it's hilly like with gullies washed away--that during a rain storm sometimes as much as 35 tons of fertile soil per acre is washed away. Can that be true?

Harrison: Yes, I believe that's the estimate all right. Erosion by wind and water must be stopped or our farm lands will soon be in the condition of China's where they cut down so many forests, and now the floods carry away so much good land that they have famine. Under the AAA plan, and also under CCC, something is actually being done to stop erosion. You've seen those little dams and terraces they're building over here in the southeastern part of the county. Well, now folks, it's getting late. Next week there will be another meeting; if the majority of the corn-hog producers agree on this program, you'll have to elect your committees, and start getting down to allotments and quotas. Thank you. (Applause)

Mrs. Howard: Well, Ben, what are we waiting for? Why don't you go up and sign a paper? I want to get going on this.

Mr. Howard: But, mother, I thought you didn't approve of the Government helping.

Mrs. Howard: Fiddlesticks! I never said such a thing. How we going to do it alone? Like as not if you cut down your corn acreage because the price is low, others would plant more and what good would that do?

Mr. Howard: Well, if that ain't just like a woman. All right, mother, we'll sign up when the time comes.

(During the entire meeting, Tom Archer has sat beside Gladys, and has been talking in low tones to her after the meeting. Bob looks sulky, and leaves the room as soon as the meeting is over.)

President: Well, I'm sure we're all grateful to Mr. Archer and Mr. Harrison; we know quite a bit more about this farm program than we did. Now it's lunch time. (Women pick up boxes and baskets and scurry over to table, as curtain falls.)





ACT III--Scene 1.

Time--one year later. Living room of the Anderson's in the city. Tables, lamp, chairs, etc. Mrs. Anderson is seen sewing. Enter Gladys and Mr. Anderson.

Both speak: Hello, mother.

Gladys: Brrr, it's cold. Is dinner ready mother? Any news? Did I have any 'phone calls?

Mrs. A.: One at a time, please. No, dinner isn't quite ready. We're waiting for company.

Gladys: Company? Who? (Mr. Anderson has taken a chair and is reading the evening paper).

Mrs. A.: The Howards,--Hattie and Ben.

Gladys: Oh.

Mrs. A.: Well, I must say you don't seem very excited. I thought you'd be glad to see them; remember the good time we had out there last winter? Bob 'phoned that--

Gladys: Bob, why didn't you tell me he came too? (runs around, patting her hair before mirror, etc.) I'm going up stairs to change my dress mother. I'll be down to help in a minute. (Leaves room humming a popular air).

Mr. Anderson: (looking up from paper). Well, I'll be glad to see the folks again. I wonder how Ben has made out on the farm this past year; it must have been pretty tough with the drought and low prices and all.

Mrs. A.: I don't know, I'm sure, but Bob sounded cheerful enough when he called up to say they were coming. They must have some money to be traveling; at least I hope things are better than they were last year. (Bell rings) Here they are now. (Mr. Anderson rises, and both greet the Howards at the door.)

(All shake hands, and say "How are you, glad to see you", etc.; "are you cold", etc. )

Mr. Anderson and Mr. Howard are seated close together, and act as if talking.

Mrs. H.: (looking around). My, your house looks so nice Milly. That's such a pretty rug. That's one thing I'm going to get with part of the corn-hog money is a new rug. I and knows I need everything; curtains and bedding and everything's about worn out.

Milly: Well, good, Hattie. I mean good that you're going to buy a rug. Sounds as though times must be a little better on the farm.





- Hattie: Oh, yes I think they are. At least prices have gone up and our checks from the Government have helped out a lot.
- Milly: Well, you know I often wondered how that AAA bushiness worked out. You remember I was there at the meeting where the County Agent was explaining it.
- Mr. Howard: (Looks up and listens, then answers)  
Well, it certainly was a godsend this year especially with the awful drought. Of course, things are none too good yet, but we've had some cash and for the first time we farmers have a chance to control our production by working together and not be at the mercy of scarcity one year and maybe surplus the next.
- Mr. Anderson: Well, the whole idea is a little hard for me to get through my head. You know when I was on the farm, the fellow who raised the most wheat and the most hogs was sitting pretty. We all envied him. I just can't get used to the idea that if you raise less you'll be better off
- Mr. Howard: It was all right Ed. to raise a lot when we had the market, but the way I see it we had lost our market abroad and with the depression here--we were stuck with a lot of cotton, hogs and wheat and so on which had cost us a lot to raise and which wasn't bringing in enough to pay the taxes, let alone pay for our seed, labor and so forth.
- Mr. Anderson: What's going to be the answer in the long run, Ben?
- Milly: We'll let the boys talk business, Hattie, and you come out to the kitchen with me, while I finish getting supper. (Both women leave room)
- Mr. Howard: The answer Ed., is to take some of those 40 million acres out of cultivation that we plowed up in war time. Of course, if we get back some of the foreign market, we can raise more. It's an adjustment program. We can plant more when we see possibilities, and we can cut down when there's danger of a surplus. It's better than just leaving things to nature. And there was an awful lot of poor folks wearing their lives away trying to farm land that never would produce good crops. They have to be helped on to better land.
- Mr. A.: What will be done with those poor lands?
- Mr. H.: Oh, they'll be left for forests, or maybe play grounds, or game refuges; anyway time and effort won't be wasted trying to get blood from a stone.
- Mr. A.: But didn't the drought just about reduce everything--aren't we, in fact away below what we need in farm products?
- Mr. H.: The drought was spotty, Ed--in some places it cleaned out nearly everything, but there's no danger of a food shortage. Secretary Wallace said recently that with the drought and the reduction program, both, agricultural production is only 15 percent below that of 1929. But here's the thing: with farm production down only 15 percent, farm prices are down 40 percent from what they were in 1929. And, mind



you, industry has cut down production 42 percent during the same time, but their prices are down only 15 percent. Maybe now we've got to wait 'till industry starts producing more.

Mr. A.: Well, you're dead right, Ben. Farmers have to have buying power, or we in the city soon feel it. We're all in the same boat, and we've got to sink or swim together. But now, Ben as a practical question, how did the AAA program affect you if you don't mind telling me?

Mr. H.: Certainly now. Well, you know I'm interested principally in raising corn--selling some and feeding most of it to hogs. On my 200 acre farm I plant about 80 acres to corn usually, and I feed, say, oh, about 85 percent of the corn to hogs. Well, you know what the price of hogs has been, Ed., around \$3.22 back in the spring of 1933. And there I was all set to go with a lot of corn and about 90 pigs; had to slop those pigs and plow and cut and husk that corn no matter what the prices were, so when the Government offered this reduction program, and agreed to give us cash for the trouble and expense we had in raising the stuff, I was mighty glad to get in on it. Bob, here, did most of the figuring and the contract work. Bob, just how did we come out on the whole program?

Bob: (Who has been reading paper, but looking around every now and then) We took the limit in corn acreage reduction, Mr. Anderson; that is, we cut 30 percent and our corn payment came to \$201.60. I never will forget these numbers,--that check looked so good to us. And for the hogs,-- you know we got \$5 apiece for raising only three-fourths as many as we had been raising and we got or will get when the last payment is in, \$300. So the total cash payment for corn and hogs was around \$500.

Mr. A.: Pretty good, I'll say.

Bob: Sure, but then we also got \$6.25 a hundred for some of the hogs we sold. We figure the AAA program helped us to get that raise in price.

Mr. H.: Yeah, and we came in on the corn loan, too. Government loaned farmers 45 cents a bushel on corn that was stored. And when it went up to 79 cents we just paid the loan, sold the corn and made the difference. Course we were fortunate; our corn wasn't hurt by the drought; but you take those fellows who lost everything in the drought--they got their checks just the same though they didn't have a thing to sell, because you see, they had signed the agreement to reduce.

Mr. A.: It worked like crop insurance, eh?

Bob: Exactly. Then you know we had late rains and got some good pasture. And we planted soy beans on the rented acres, and had a good crop. I was reading, or in fact, we had the figures in school from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in Washington, that farm income is 19 percent higher this year than it was last year, with the drought. The farmers got 1 billion dollars more this year.

Mr. H.: Now that we can look back on the program we can see what a help it was. But in the heat and drought and trying to get our hog quotas





down to Government figures, we used to get so blamed mad, we'd think we'd never go along thru with it again. But when the checks came in, we felt different. And believe me that money will help to prime the pump all right; it will circulate all over the country for shoes, furniture, and so on, because farmers need just about everything.

Bob: They sure do. Take houses. The Government has made a survey of farm homes in 46 States, and this survey shows that just one-half of the farm homes in this country need general repairs; that if the farmers could undertake those repairs they would spend 3 billion 5 hundred million dollars; think what a market there is there for electricity, and only 18 percent have running water.

Mr. H.: Well, I tell you we've all had it hard, but I'm blessed if I don't think the women on farms have had about the worst of it; Hattie has worked night and day trying to make ends meet, canning, sewing, and patching and selling stuff at the curb market and so on. I tell you our farm women deserve a lot of credit the way they've carried on during this depression--trying to keep up our spirits, although they were worrying about the children not getting a schooling and so on. Of course, at that we haven't been as bad off as many.

Mr. A.: Well, I'm sure glad to hear all this. But how about this next year, will you have to still keep acreage down, or didn't the drought help reduce so much that won't be necessary?

Bob: The farmers have voted to continue the plan, only the acreage reduction will be less. Ten percent of the wheat acreage, ten percent of corn and 10 percent less hogs. You see Mr. Anderson, figures show that in the past after a drought, farmers rushed to planting more acres. After the drought of 1894, for example, farmers planted 10 million more acres to corn; they had a bumper crop and the resulting surplus brought the price of corn down from 45 cents to 25 cents a bushel. And you must remember we haven't as many hogs and cattle to feed. As a result of the drought, and the selling program, we have 1/3 less hogs and about 15 percent less cattle. No we've still got to be able to control production as I see it, to avoid getting right back into surpluses.

Mr. A.: Ben, you've got a smart boy here. He sure knows the reasons back of this program. And you know we can see some effect here in the city too. Stores are much busier than last year. And Gladys got a job on the head of it, it seems. She's secretary now in the Northern Farm Machinery Company. They sold 61 tractors for cash in one week this fall after farmers got their checks. By the way, where is Gladys?

(Gladys enters--she has changed her dress, and rearranged her hair).

Gladys: Here I am, Dad. How do you do, Mr. Howard? Hello, Bob. (shakes hands with both)--(Gladys and Bob go to one side of the room).

Gladys: Well, it's been a long time since we heard of you Bob. Why didn't you write once in a while? How's everybody down at Vernon Center?





Bob: Oh, I thought you'd know all the news. I thought the handsome Ag. teacher would be telling you everything when he came up to the city.

Gladys: Oh, don't be silly, Bob. The handsome Ag. teacher as you call him is going to be married next month to my chum, and I'm going to be bridesmaid. He was telling me all about their plans that night at the Farm \_\_\_\_\_ meeting.

Bob: Oh, Gee, Tee whiz,--honest? Oh, I've been a sap,---say isn't it a wonderful evening? Let's celebrate.

(Enter Mrs. Howard and Mrs. Anderson, talking)

Mrs. H.: And so I said to her, I said, "Well, it might be all right for some folks, but as for me, never; my, Milly, that plum conserve is just grand. We got a lot of awfully good new recipes for carrot marmalade, and other jams and jellies at the Home Demonstration meetings. I'll send you some.

Mrs. A.: Yes, please do. And you mean to tell me you made that dress at the sewing project, too? It's pretty nice to have those home demonstration leaders to help. I remember how you used to hate sewing. Well, folks come on, supper's ready. What are you young folks going to do for entertainment tonight? Can't you plan something for Bob, Gladys?

Gladys: Oh, I've got the plans all made. I'm going to take Bob to a swell movie. It will help both of us in our future life.

All: Future life? What do you mean?

Gladys: Well, you see folks, I've always been crazy about a farm, and it looks as though I may be living on one soon, so I am going to take Bob to see a movie at University High School. It's called the "Farmers Trail Leads On". (All gather around and shake hands as curtain falls.) (Gladys speaks loudly and dramatically when saying "It's called 'The Farmers Trail Leads On'.")

#### C U R T A I N

The film strip, "Farmers Trail Leads On" can then be thrown on the screen.

